

REMARKS

In the Official Action mailed on **9 July 2008**, Examiner reviewed claims 1-3, 5-7, and 34-44. Examiner rejected claims 1-3, and 5-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5-7, 34-36, and 39-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on Maston et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,695,112, hereinafter "Maston"). Examiner rejected claims 37-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maston.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

Examiner rejected claim 1 for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter Applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, Examiner averred that the phrase “wherein the mechanism is configured to be detached by breaking the substrate in the specific area” is unclear.

Applicant has amended claim 1 to clarify that embodiments of the present invention include removal features for breaking the substrate in a predefined boundary between the key area and the circuit board to permanently detach the key area from the circuit board. This amendment is supported on page 4, lines 24 to page 5, line 3, as well as FIGs. 1-4. No new matter was added. Hence, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §112.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Examiner rejected independent claims 1, 34, and 43-44 as being anticipated by Maston. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Maston nowhere discloses: a) a key area of the substrate of a circuit board which comprises an identification mechanism which uniquely identifies the key area as being

originally attached to the circuit board; or b) a signal trace on the circuit board which is routed from the circuit board through the key area and back to the circuit board.

Maston discloses a locking mechanism which prevents the forceful removal of terminals from a connector housing (see Maston column 1, lines 25-32; column 1, lines 44-46; column 3, lines 39-41; column 3, line 67 to column 4, line 2; and column 4, lines 19-24). The circuit board of Maston includes an edgeboard connector which includes signals routed to the circuit board and several figure labels (see Maston, FIG. 1). Applicant respectfully points out that Maston's figure labels "NO-4" and "NO-3" (see Maston, FIG. 1) are in no way described as being mechanisms for *identification of the circuit board* to which they were originally attached. Rather, Maston expressly describes only *figure labels* for two "conductor runs" which are in no way described as identifying the circuit board:

Also in arrangement 10, in order to provide positive mechanical locking of the connector 14 to the edge card plug 16, a lock-hole 22 disposed, **illustratively between conductor runs No. 3 and No. 4 of plug 16**, is provided for receiving a resilient latch molded integrally in the electrical edgeboard connector 14 (see Maston, col. 2, lines 18-23, emphasis added).

Applicant respectfully points out that simply *labeling figures* is entirely inadequate to anticipate an identification mechanism which uniquely identifies the key area as being originally attached to the circuit board.

In contrast, embodiments of the present invention include a key area of a substrate of a circuit board. The key area comprises an identification mechanism which uniquely identifies the key area **as being originally attached to the circuit board** (see instant application, page 3, line 24 to page 5, line 18; also FIGs. 1-4). In addition, in embodiments of the present invention, **a portion of the signal trace is routed from the circuit board through the key area and back to the**

circuit board (see instant application, page 3, line 24 to page 4, line 3; also FIGs. 1-4). In these embodiments, the signal trace conducts a signal required for a normal operation of the circuit board. When the key area is detached from the circuit board the signal trace is permanently severed and normal operation of the circuit board is disrupted. Maston nowhere discloses a portion of the signal trace being routed from the circuit board through the key area and back to the circuit board, or an identification mechanism which uniquely identifies the key area as being originally attached to the circuit board.

Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 34, 43, and 44 to clarify that embodiments of the present invention include: a) a key area of a substrate of a circuit board which comprises an identification mechanism which uniquely identifies the key area as being originally attached to the circuit board; and b) a signal trace on the circuit board which is routed from the circuit board through the key area and back to the circuit board. These amendments are supported on page 3, line 24 to page 5, lines 18 of the instant application. No new matter was added.

Applicant has also amended dependent claim 2 to match claim language from claim 1. Additionally, Applicant has amended claim 7 to indicate that a portion of the key area may be encapsulated in a hardening material to protect the key area from being easily manipulated. This amendment is supported on page 4, lines 17-20 of the instant application. Moreover, Applicant has amended claims 37-39 for minor grammatical changes. Furthermore, Applicant has amended claim 41 to indicate that an integrated circuit on the circuit board disables at least some operations of the circuit board if the tab is decoupled. This amendment is supported on page 2, lines 4-9, and page 5, lines 11-28 of the instant application. Furthermore, Applicant has amended claim 44 to indicate that the removal features include at least one of slits, slots, gaps, channels, bores, or weakened or thinned parts. This amendment is supported on page 4, line 9 to page 5, line 3 of

the instant application; also, FIGs. 1-4. Applicant has cancelled claims 3, 5-6, and 40 without prejudice.

Applicant has also added new claims 45-54, which claim subject matter already described in these remarks and are supported by the aforementioned sections of the instant application. No new matter was added.

Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 34, 43, and 44 as presently amended are in condition for allowance. Applicant also submits that dependent claims which dependent upon these independent claims are for the same reasons in condition for allowance and for reasons of the unique combinations recited in such claims.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the application is presently in form for allowance.
Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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